



Reflections on Israel at War / October 2023

Dated: October 20, 2023

Among the myriad of voices that clamor for justice on either side, there is the deep-rooted anger of generational hatred that is evident on both sides. While seeing from a pure political perspective, actions taken may seem to have justification by both parties, the cause is much deeper than that. Destroy Hamas, which is the cry of Israel and her allies, seems to be commendable after the horrific and brutal attack that took place by the terrorist group on October 7, but the end goal of their elimination is impossible. Hamas or Houthis or Hezbollah or any other old or new groups that springs up is not about a people group, rather it is an ideology, a cause motivated by hatred that is engrained from birth until death. And ideologies cannot be destroyed by weapons.

The plight of those who are losing lives in Gaza as collateral damage does nothing to deter future generations from becoming Hamas themselves, instead it has guaranteed the creation of more terror groups in the future, since the real issue is the problem of the heart. Israel (through Abraham) which was chosen, by the only true God, to bring the gospel into the world, but they took their Messiah, Jesus Christ, and crucified Him on the Cross. Today Israel is blinded by their ancestry not realizing that salvation is only through Jesus Christ, as Paul (a Jew who opposed Christ, hated and killed Christians, later converted to Christ) under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit wrote (in love), "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek [non-Jews]." - Romans 1:16. Today the mainstream followers of Judaism still reject Christ just as they did over 2000 years ago. Many still spit on the faces of those coming to share the gospel of Christ in their lands or their own who convert to Christianity. In reality, they have no special access to God because of being a Jew, similar to a follower of Islam or a Hindu. Those who die without Christ (Jews or gentiles) face the judgement and the wrath of

God in the place called Hell, for there is no respecter of person with God (Psalm 7:11, Romans 2:11, Revelation 20:15).

While religion vainly tries to reach God by personal moral excellence, God reached down to man since man is fallen and can never satisfy God's standard of holiness. Thus, Christ did not come to form a religion, but to bring us to a right relationship with our Creator. And only Divinity can satisfy divine requirements for sin. God, who is Holy, gave shadows of a future event, declared that an innocent lamb must be sacrificed for the Passover and its blood applied to the doorposts, in Exodus 12, the fulfillment done in Christ, "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." - Romans 5:8. This was earlier prophesied in Isaiah 53 with statements such as, "But he [Jesus Christ] was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." - Isaiah 53:5.

In the Qur'an, which was written 600 years after Christ, Jesus (Isa) is given the status of a prophet who will die and rise again (Surah 19:30-34), and that He speaks the truth, is righteous, will be born of a virgin (Surah 3:45-47). Should they not obey Christ when He declared, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." - John 10:9? All of mankind goes the path of death and destruction, where Jesus said of eternal life, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." - John 14:6. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." - Acts 4:12. Only one mediator between God and men, Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5). His Godhead has been declared from Genesis to Revelation. "For in him [Jesus Christ] dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." - Colossians 2:9. John 1:1-14 records how God (Word) became Man (flesh and blood). It is the Person; not about philosophy, moral teachings, religion, family history, good works, or any other means, but a personal turning point, being convicted of sin to call upon Christ for personal salvation from sin. "For all [you] have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" - Romans 3:23.

Though God is not finished with Israel, He judges sin, no matter who does it, or under what name. While we pray for the peace of Jerusalem (Genesis 12:3, Psalm 122:6), the same God who judged the sins of the Canaanites through Joshua after giving them 400 years to repent, this same God destroyed Israel and scattered them all over the world when they sinned against Him (Isaiah 63:10, Luke 19:43-44). Babylon, Assyria, and Rome stand as witnesses. And God (Jesus Christ) who is the Creator of all things seen and unseen (Colossians 1:16), calls men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30). To His children (Messianic Jews or gentiles) Jesus says, "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." - Matthew 5:9, and furthermore, "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." - Matthew 5:44-45.

Jesus while dying on the Cross for the sin of the world said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" - Luke 23:34. Many have taken up that call when they received a heart change, when they were born-again of God. People like Corrie ten Boom, who forgave her captors during her imprisonment by the Nazis in WW2; the wife of Graham Staines, the Australian Christian missionaries, who lost her sons aged 10 and 6 along with her husband

(1999), working among the leper colonies of India, being burnt to death by Hindu Nationalist Group Bajrang Dal, she stated, standing by the coffins with her 13 year old daughter, "I've no hatred for anyone. I've no anger." The desire of Christians facing persecution to respond in love that their persecutors might know the love of Christ, has been the hallmark of true Christianity from the Waldensians in Italy, Perpetua in the Roman empire, Sadhu Sunder Singh of India, to the Messianic Jew Richard Wrumbrand who experienced imprisonment and torture by the then-Communist regime of Romania.

Coming back to the ideology of Hamas, how then can this be defeated? it will be defeated the same way the hatred of Jews to their enemies should be defeated, a heart change, that God does in the heart of man through regeneration, as it was in the life of Saul who became the Apostle Paul. Thus, Paul preached, "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." - Acts 20:21. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." - Ephesians 6:12. Evil will always exist as long as sin is present. Yes, justice for crimes perpetuated must be sought, and one's defending of life is warranted, but this conflict will not be solved by war. While a disproportionate response may be seen as justifiable in the eyes of some, God values all lives equally that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." - John 3:16. The message on that blessed dawn, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" in Luke 2:14, still rings today for all who will hear and heed the call to Repent and Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for eternal salvation.

[any emphasis in the Scriptures used are mine]